

HOW TO KEEP WORMS FROM REPRODUCING

IHAVE now completed the consideration of the best means for the destruction or expulsion of worms. Little, however, would be accomplished in most cases, were we not to prevent their reproduction, which can only be done by the removal of the causes promotive of their generation and nourishment.

Every species of worm seems to have its origin and support in a weak and depraved condition of the digestive organs. The indication, therefore, is to restore to them the proper degree of vigour, which may be effected by the exhibition of lime water, bitter tonics, the preparations of steel, and by a due regulation of diet, with whatever else conduces to the confirmation of health.

We are told by Brera, that camphor is particularly serviceable with this view, by counteracting the “predisposition to the further development of verminous seeds.” How far this is true, I cannot say. But the carbonate of iron I have found highly useful in doing away that condition of the *primae viae*, which favours the production, or continuance of worms. Common salt, freely used, is also excellent under similar circumstances. To this purport we have some very interesting facts. It is stated, in one of the reports of a committee of the House of Commons, respecting the salt duties, that, by an old law of Holland, criminals were punished by being kept on bread without salt, and that, to use the language of the writer, “the effect was most horrible, these wretched creatures having been devoured by worms, engendered in their own stomachs.” We learn from the same source, that the people of Ireland, who, on account of their extreme poverty, were unable to purchase salt, from the enormous duty on that article, became sickly, and especially with gastric and intestinal complaints, and, as a consequence, much infested with worms.

The importance of this article is further illustrated by the eagerness with which it is sought after by animals, and that, when deprived of it, they pine away, and become emaciated, probably from worms. By the shepherds of England, a common expedient to cure sheep of worms, to which they are very liable, is to turn them to feed, for a few weeks, on the salt marshes, which is represented as very effectual. Aware of this fact, lord Somerville, who is, perhaps, the largest owner of sheep in the world,

and the most successful in the preservation of them, allows annually a ton of salt to every hundred.

Taken all together, these facts are very curious, as showing the necessity of this condiment to our well being, and its particularly efficacy in the case before us.

Chapman, N.: *Elements of Therapeutics and Materia Medica*, fifth edition. Philadelphia, Carey, Lea and Carey, 1827, vol. 2, pp. 36-37.